

## ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY AND WESTERN DEMOCRACY ABU AL-A'LA AL-MAUDUDI (Comparative Studies)

*DEMOKRASI ISLAM DAN DEMOKRASI BARAT  
ABU AL-A'LA AL-MAUDUDI (Studi Komparasi)*

**Muh. Yasin Ceh Nur<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> *Institut Agama Islam Sengkang*

**Nurdin<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> *Institut Agama Islam Sengkang*

**Samsuddin<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> *Institut Agama Islam Sengkang*

[\\*muhyasincehnur01@gmail.com](mailto:muhyasincehnur01@gmail.com)

[\\*nurdinzainal@gmail.com](mailto:nurdinzainal@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

Abu al-A'la al-Maududi is an Islamic thinker who focuses his thoughts on Islamic politics, statehood, and the concept of democracy. The aim of this research is to understand the concept of Islamic and Western democracy from the perspective of Abu al-A'la al-Maududi. This research is qualitative, using library research data collection methods. The data sources in this research are primary data and secondary data. In analyzing data, researchers used descriptive methods, content analysis, interpretation, and comparison. The research results show that Abu al-A'la al-Maududi believes that in Islamic democracy there is a very fundamental principle, namely the concept of monotheism as the basis for building a political system based on the values contained in the qur'an and Hadist. Meanwhile, regarding Western democracy, it is absolutely in the hands of the people, the people are the highest source of power in the state. The idea of sovereignty elevates the people to the highest level of authority in the state, becoming more dangerous if the majority decision overrides God's will in Islam.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Islam, West, Maududi

### **ABSTRAK**

*Abu al-A'la al-Maududi merupakan salah satu tokoh pemikir islam yang fokus pemikirannya tentang politik Islam, kenegaraan dan konsep demokrasi. Adapun tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui konsep demokrasi Islam dan Barat dalam pandangan Abu al-A'la al-Maududi. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif, dengan menggunakan metode pengumpulan data library research. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini yaitu data primer dan data sekunder. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif, content analisis, interpretasi, komparasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Abu al-A'la al-Maududi meyakini di dalam demokrasi Islam terdapat prinsip yang sangat fundamental yaitu konsep tauhid sebagai dasar membangun sistem politik yang berdasarkan nilai-nilai yang terkandung di dalam al-Qur'an dan Hadis. Sedangkan mengenai demokrasi Barat mutlak di tangan rakyat, rakyat adalah sumber kekuasaan tertinggi dalam negara. Gagasan kedaulatan mengangkat rakyat ke tingkat otoritas tertinggi di negara, menjadi lebih berbahaya jika keputusan mayoritas mengesampingkan kehendak Tuhan dalam Islam.*

**Kata-kata kunci:** Demokrasi, Islam, Barat, Maududi

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Political discussions seem to be a historical inevitability. In simple terms, political events in human life represent the path and existence of human civilization. Humans seem to be destined to always touch, be involved with, and make out with those known as politicians, who from time to time gradually show their charming and attractive characteristics, but not infrequently they manifest in frightening forms. Therefore, it is not wrong if philosophers like Aristotle state that humans are political creatures (Salik, 2009).

Thoughts about the state and politics can be traced back to ancient Greece. Ancient Greek political ideas continue to have a significant impact in many areas of the world today, and it could be argued that it is difficult to properly understand Western political philosophy and Islamic politics without first examining the political thought of the Greek period.

Socrates was one of the people who really cared about the state. Socrates' thoughts can be found in the work of his student, Plato, who succeeded in conveying his teacher's ideas in a book entitled "Polyteria" (Republic). The book states that the country's leader must be a philosopher (Salik, 2009).

Muslim intellectuals and thinkers are often reluctant to debate state and government issues. They are only concerned about addressing the state and government, especially the issue of the state's relationship with religion. In this scenario, different theories emerge about the relationship between religion and the state.

First, this group considers Islam not a religion in the Western sense, which only focuses on human interaction with God. On the

other hand, Islam is a comprehensive religion that regulates all elements of life, including government affairs. Thus, religion and state are interrelated.

Second, the group considers religion and the state to have a reciprocal relationship, complement each other, and need each other. In this scenario, religion requires the state and is even considered a requirement of Sharia. In general, they believe that the founding of a state will enable religion and its teachings to develop. On the other hand, religion is needed so that the growth of the country is always regulated by religious law, ethics, and morality.

Third, the group believes that Islam is a religion as perceived by Western civilization. Religion and state are two independent entities. The state is a political institution, not a religious institution. Like the previous apostles, the Prophet Muhammad was just an apostle and had no government power.

Abu al-a'la al-Maududi, one of the Islamic political thinkers above, has his own perspective on the state and government. He stated that religion and the state cannot be separated because they are one unit. Because religion includes politics and the state, So the state functions as a political and religious organization. He believes that government is founded on the basis of divine status because God is the highest authority, also called sovereignty in political terms. Meanwhile, humans only act as worldly caliphs who enforce God's commands (Salik, 2009).

To realize his ideas, he tried to build concepts based on his strong values to organize the lives of Muslims in the state and government. According to Maududi, the idea of sovereignty and Islamic government is feasible because Islam is more than just a religion in the Western sense; it only involves humans and God.

But Islam is more than that; it is a complete religion, complete with instructions and rules in various aspects of human life, including politics and the state. Therefore, looking at the introduction above, what the author wants to describe is how Abu al-a'la al-Maududi sees Islamic democracy and Western democracy in terms of similarities as well as differences.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Democracy has had two versions throughout its history: direct democracy and representative democracy. In direct democracy, citizens make political choices in joint meetings. This can only be achieved with a small population. This kind of democracy, as prac-

ticed in the ancient Greek city-states, has nothing to do with modern democracy.

Representative democracy developed in Europe and America throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, with decisions taken by majority vote. Regular elections, adult suffrage, freedom to form political organizations or parties, opposition, freedom of expression, the rule of law, and civil and minority rights are important components of representative democracy. The principles of democracy consist of:

1. Eq. confirms that every citizen (ordinary people or officials) has equal opportunities and equal standing before the law and government.
2. Freedom affirms that every individual citizen or person has the freedom to express opinions and form associations.
3. Pluralism Provides confirmation and recognition that diversity of culture, language, ethnicity, religion, thought, or others is a condition of science *qua non* (something that cannot be avoided) (Nul Hakim, n.d.).

Muslims believe that Islam is a comprehensive, complete, and perfect religion as a guide to life. Islam not only provides moral teachings but also has a political structure with various forms and qualities. If we look at the sources of Islamic teachings, there are no clear rules in the Qur'an or hadith that state the form and system of state that must be implemented by an Islamic society, including rules regarding existing mechanisms of power, such as whether power must be exercised, separated, distributed, or integrated between legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

However, both the Koran and hadith provide guidance in the form of general, basic ideas for government systems. Several principles of Islamic Siyasah can be stated by referring to a number of verses that form the basis of the view of Shari'a in social and state life, including the principle of human unity, the principle of law enforcement and justice, and the principle of justice. appointing and obeying leaders, the principle of deliberation, the principle of equality, and the principle of interpersonal relations. neighbors, the concept of mutual cooperation, peace, administration, the right to life, and the meaning of good and evil (Nul Hakim, n.d.).

## C. METHOD

The type of research used in this research is qualitative research; therefore, the data collection method was carried out using the library research data collection method (Hadi, 1997). So this

research obtains data by searching through library literature in the form of books, articles, and other relevant matters. Research uses historical methods to search for, analyze, and make interpretations and generalizations from facts, which are the opinions of experts. At this stage, the author wants to collect library data about the concept of democracy according to Abu al-A'la al-Maududi.

The data sources in this research are primary data and secondary data (Zed, 2008). Primary data is first-hand book literature (written directly by characters) or initial data sources. For primary data sources, the author used the books Abu al-A'la al-Maududi, Islamic Way of Life, translated by Prof. Osman Raliby, Principles of the Muslim View of Life, and The Islamic Law and Constitution, translated by Asek Hikmah, Law and the Constitution of the Political System of Islam. Meanwhile, secondary data is book literature that is not related to the initial data source, such as the thoughts of a character written by someone else. For primary data sources, the author used Mohammad Salik's book, The Concept of an Islamic State According to Abu al-A'la al-Maududi, and articles related to figures.

In analyzing data, researchers try to find meaning in the sense of trying to reveal the implied and explicit meanings and relate them to things that are theoretically logical (Muhammadir, 1996). The steps taken are as follows: 1.) Descriptive Method; 2.) Content Analysis; 3.) Interpretation Method; 4.) Comparison.

## D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Biography of Abu al-A'la al-Maududi

The full name is Abu al-A'la al-Maududi, but in the future we will just call him Maududi. He was born on September 25, 1903, in Aurangabad, Central India, and died on September 23, 1979, in a hospital in New York, United States. The name Abu al-A'la al-Maududi once caused problems because "Abu al-A'la" means father of the Most High, while the Most High is one of God's attributes.

Maududi was born into a sharif family (a family of North Indian Muslim figures) from Delhi who lived in the Deccan. He is the youngest of three siblings. His ancestors on his father's side were descendants of the prophet Muhammad. This is why he uses the name 'Sayyid' at the beginning of his name (Salik, 2009).

As a child, Maududi studied at home, being taught and educated by his own father, a Sufi follower who left his profession as a

lawyer named Ahmad Hasan. Therefore, in carrying out his practice, he often has to do things that are contrary to his conscience as a Muslim who wants to uphold the purity of Islamic morals, and also because he is disgusted with the lifestyle of his professional colleagues, which he thinks is westernized and not Islamic (Sjadzali, 2022).

After being educated at home, he enrolled at Madrasah Fawqaniyah, a secondary institution that combined modern Western teaching with traditional Islamic teaching. Abul A'la al-Maududi continued his formal studies at Dar 'Ulum College in Hyderabad until his father became ill and died (Satriadi, 2018). He continued his studies independently. By the age of 20, he had learned Arabic, Persian, English, and, most importantly, Urdu.

Maududi began his journalistic career in 1918, at the age of fifteen. In 1920, he was appointed editor of the Jabalpore-based Urdu daily *Taj*. At that time, his achievements were at their peak, and he was immediately appointed editor-in-chief of two newspapers: *Muslim* (1921–1923) and *al-Jam'iyyati' Ulama-I Hind* (1921–1928). In 1920, under the leadership of al-Maududi, this second journal developed into a fairly significant Islamic daily in India. In 1932, he led the publication of *Tarjumah al-Qur'an*, a journal of Islamic revivalism, in Hyderabad (Damanik et al., 2019).

At around the age of 20, his interests turned to nationalism. In 1918 and 1919, he wrote many works in honor of Congress party leaders, especially Mahatma Gandhi and Madan Muhan Malavia. Maududi opposed democratic and secular ideals, which he felt were incompatible with faith. He urged Muslims not to fight for these ideals because it would destroy the minority Muslim community. He advised Muslims not to join the liberation struggle led by the Indian National Congress and other nationalist groups. As a result, Maududi began Islamic reform efforts in August 1941 by establishing an organization called *Jama'at al-Islami* in Lahore, where he was elected as Amir (leader) until 1972.

Maududi was arrested and imprisoned on March 28, 1953, because of his work, "The Qadiani Problems." However, on May 25, 1955, Maududi was declared free by the High Court because the law that detained him had been revoked (Ahadiya et, al., 2022).

Maududi's ideals, especially his aim to restore Islam as a political system, often conflicted with Pakistani government policies. The government sees this as dangerous. Authorities imprisoned Maududi to limit his social impact. Nevertheless, Maududi fought for

his views and never stopped fighting for Islam as a choice for modern Muslims, who were mired in theological, philosophical, and sociopolitical turmoil.

Abu al-A'la al-Maududi's written works cover the fields of interpretation, law, politics, and history. His famous works are:

1. *al-Jihad fi al-Islam* (1930),
2. *Risalah Diniyah* (1932),
3. *Tafhkim al-Qur'an* (1942-1972),
4. *The Islamic Law and Constitution* (1955),
5. *Islamic Way of Life* (1987),
6. *Islamic Today* (1968)
7. *DII*

Maududi's books have been translated into various languages throughout the world so that he can indirectly express his opinions on social, political, and religious issues. However, his goal of creating a caliphate system in Pakistan was not realized. In the end, Pakistan declared itself an Islamic state with the name Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Barsihannor, 2013).

### **Islamic Democracy and Western Democracy Perspective of Abu al-A'la al-Maududi**

When discussing whether Islam needs its adherents to build a country, the Koran and Hadith as the two main sources of Islamic teachings are, of course, the references. The Qur'an contains the words of Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW to serve as a guide for human existence. Meanwhile, hadith is an interpretation of the Koran given by the Prophet Muhammad in the form of sayings, actions, or taqrir.

Maududi's political ideas must be in line with Islamic democracy, a form of government based on three principles: First, only Allah has the authority to issue directives and sovereign rights. No scripture limits its authority entirely to metaphysical matters. His power is directed directly at all of mankind. It encapsulates every aspect of human existence, including doctrine, morals, law, and politics. Because the Qur'an states firmly that only Allah has power in all fields. One of the fundamental doctrines of Islam is that God has legal and political power. Maududi intended to convey the message that no one person, group, or even all the people of a country can claim sovereignty. Only God has sovereignty, and humans are only executors of sovereignty (Syam, 2007).

So, according to Maududi, democracy must be in line with Islamic beliefs, including monotheism. The concept of government or state institutions put forward by Maududi on the basis of monotheism is known as theocracy, although it is not the same as the one that previously prevailed in Europe, where a certain group of individuals became priests. Meanwhile, Islamic theocracy is governed by the entire Islamic community, not just one religious organization. All Islamic communities organize their governments according to the book of Allah and the practices of the Prophet Muhammad.

Second, the Sunnah of the Prophet is the source. It must be acknowledged that the Sunnah of the Prophet is a source of law and contains unique provisions aimed at preventing the government, legislative bodies, and judicial institutions from issuing orders, enforcing laws, or making decisions that conflict with the Sunnah. God is the true creator of the law. If no legal considerations are found in the text of the Qur'an, then we must be guided by the Sunnah of the Prophet as a source of Islamic law.

Third, representation has two elements: the Islamic state is based on representation, not sovereignty. In an Islamic state, the power of the caliphate is not in the hands of individuals or families but is in the hands of the entire Islamic population, assuming they have their own state (Syam, 2007). However, this caliphate is not a true caliphate as long as it does not follow God's law. Therefore, according to Maududi, this caliphate is only given to people who truly believe and are pious (Salik, 2009).

The ideas outlined above show that the state is only a tool of continuous reform based on the rules revealed by Allah Almighty to humanity through the Prophet Muhammad. This might be seen as a country that was founded to uphold the rules of Allah SWT. Likewise, humanity must follow and obey the commands of Allah SWT.

Maududi wanted a monotheistic or monotheistic form of government that provided direction and guaranteed that human existence was truly equal before God. A difference is simply a division of life that allows dynamic behavior to occur. Therefore, Maududi believes that the gaps that exist between socio-economic groups will not be used as a tool of domination.

Conditions like this clearly contradict the Islamic belief, which states that every human being is a caliph of Allah and everyone has the same obligations in the position of caliphate. So that everyone's status and standing in society are equal, and someone becomes a

ruler with unlimited and arbitrary power, depriving other people of their rights as caliphs (Barsihannor, 2013).

Allah has chosen people to be caliphs on earth. Every human being is given the task of being God's representative and is responsible for it. Allah's guidance includes unlimited knowledge, wisdom, and mercy; therefore, the principles underlying Islamic life are superior and healthy and cannot be compared with other human-created systems. The human mind and intellect excel in certain scientific disciplines, such as natural science and technology. However, without God's guidance, human reason is completely inadequate to establish standards that are fair and honest to all parts of human nature and lead to true pleasure. Sometimes the results of human knowledge and wisdom are not enough to reveal the correct path for human life (Maududi, 1979).

According to Maududi, there are three basic principles that form the basis of statehood according to Islam, namely:

1. Islam is a complete religion, complete with instructions for regulating all aspects of human life, including political life. Therefore, in being a state, Muslims do not need to imitate the Western political system; in Islam, they have implemented the political system, especially the one that was implemented during Khulafaul Rasyidin.
2. The highest power in politics is called sovereignty, and this sovereignty is only in God; mankind is only the executor of the sovereignty determined by God as God's caliph on earth. Thus, there is no such thing as popular sovereignty, so the people are only the executors of that sovereignty and must submit to the laws as stated in the Koran and hadiths of the Prophet.
3. The Islamic political system is a universal system and does not recognize geographical, linguistic, or national boundaries and ties (Sjadzali, 2022).

In Muslim countries that have experienced colonialism and foreign rule, people with secular Islamic backgrounds tend to lead political and cultural movements. Maududi stated that the Western concept of separating religion from political secularism was foreign to Islam and that its application would be a rejection of the concept of Islamic government (Maududi 1993).

Societies that adhere to Western democratic ideology want to achieve national independence and prosperity for their country through gradual secularism, which has been imitated by industrial-

ized countries such as today. Religious understanding is reorganized so that it does not conflict with existing policies.

Maududi believed that in Muslim countries suffering from foreign domination, the leadership of political and cultural movements fell into the hands of those who did not have an Islamic background. They embraced nationalism, directed their efforts towards the goals of independence and national prosperity on secular lines, and tried to imitate, step by step, the developed countries of this era (Maududi 1993).

The basic concept of Western democracy is unlimited sovereignty in the hands of the people; according to him, such a system of government is more misleading and not divine." Western democracy, according to him, is associated with God, tends to ignore God completely, and causes a lot of suffering. The idea of sovereignty elevates the people to the highest level of authority in the state. It becomes more dangerous if the majority decision overrides God's will and the laws contained in Islam.

According to Maududi, the previous discussion makes it clear that Islam, when viewed from the perspective of political philosophy, is the antithesis of Western secular democracy. The philosophical foundation of Western democracy is popular sovereignty. Likewise, Maududi also revealed weaknesses in Western democracy that were very detrimental (Maududi 1993).

This concept was strongly opposed by Maududi. For him, the absolute power of legislative regulations that determine values and norms of behavior is in the hands of the people. Lawmaking is their prerogative, and laws must be in accordance with their wishes and opinions. If a particular law is desired by the general public, but due to misunderstanding, perhaps from a religious or moral point of view, steps must be taken to include it in the statute book. If the public does not like a law and demands that it be cancelled, however just and right, it may have to be abolished immediately.

Maududi did not agree with the Western understanding of democracy as practiced in modern countries. This system fails to guarantee economic, social, political, and legal justice. People's political rights are only a formality once every four or five years, and those who receive legal protection mostly come from the upper classes. The principle of supremacy of law is a false term created by the rulers. Even Marxist countries that claim to be democracies seem unable to provide certainty regarding their political, economic, and social fates (Maududi 1993).

Therefore, Maududi believes that in Islamic democracy there is a very fundamental principle, namely the concept of monotheism, as the basis for building a political system based on the values contained in the Koran and Hadith. Meanwhile, for Maududi, Western democracy is absolutely in the hands of the people; the people are the highest source of power in the state. Maududi's rejection of Western democracy was based on his understanding of the verses of the Koran, which show that the highest authority and sovereignty are in the hands of the people.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Abu al-A'la al-Maududi said democracy must be in line with Islamic beliefs, including monotheism. The concept of government or state institutions put forward by Maududi on the basis of monotheism is known as theocracy, although it is not the same as the one that previously prevailed in Europe, where a certain group of individuals became priests. Meanwhile, Islamic theocracy is governed by the entire Islamic community, not just one religious organization. All Islamic communities organize their governments according to the book of Allah and the practices of the Prophet Muhammad.

The basic concept of Western democracy is unlimited sovereignty in the hands of the people. According to him, such a government system is more misleading. According to him, Western democracy tends to ignore God completely and causes a lot of suffering. The idea of sovereignty elevating the people to the highest level of authority in the state becomes more dangerous if the majority decision overrides the will of God and the laws contained in Islam. This system fails to guarantee economic, social, political, and legal justice. People's political rights are only a formality once every four or five years, and those who receive legal protection mostly come from the upper classes.

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